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The Summit Herald

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Down Canyon From Heber

Train to Make Excursion Runs for Public Today

By THELSON H. LUKE
HEBER CITY — Although the runs for the public down the canyon from Heber today before warred by a derailment in its plan to haul Utah State Legislators from Wildwood to Heber Saturday, the Heber Creepers will make excursion runs for the public down the creek dam, short of the point where the derailment occurred. Passengers may only board the train at Heber, he said. He indicated about 300 may be carried at a time.

Mr. Ashton said the train will then be shut down for winter and the sponsors will use the time to improve their equipment and attempt to strengthen their corporate structure financially. "Although we couldn't take the legislators as planned Saturday," said Mr. Ashton, "we did talk to them and proposed that the tracks between Heber and Bridal Veil

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Ashton, Heber businessman and president of the Wasatch Mountain Railway Company, organization formed with the aim of launching the steam train as a tourist venture between Heber and Bridal Veil Falls. Mr. Ashton said the engine was back on the tracks by Saturday afternoon and returned to Heber. Only the engine and the coal car were on the trail run. The derailment occurred when what was thought to be a drift turned out to be ice and the front wheels of the engine went off the rails. There was no other damage. The train will leave the station in Heber City at noon today, Mr. Ashton said, and will make "three or four" runs between



Herald Photo by Moe Anderson

lines. The train hit a sheet of ice early Saturday and derailed. It was about six inches off the track just before noon Saturday.

EIGHT INCHES WERE ALL that kept Engine 618 from making its inaugural run on schedule Saturday on the Wasatch Mountain Railway, along the old Heber Creepers

Train to Make

Excursion
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Falls be made a part of the Wasatch State Park. We of course could receive no answers at this time but several of the legislators talked very favorably of the proposal.

"The Utah State Road Commission has given us until April of this year to get any rolling stock into the valley," said Mr. Ashton. "We then have until April of 1972 to present a feasibility plan to the road commission convincing them we can make the plan work to operate a tourist train. There has been some misunderstanding that we have only until April of 1971, but that is merely to get our rolling stock into the valley. We have until April of 1972 for a final decision on the whole project, and we definitely plan to operate this summer as part of convincing them that the project can be successful."

The road commission has already announced plans for the new Provo Canyon highway from Olmstead to Nunn's station, below Bridal Veil Falls, which would entail tearing up the present tracks to that point. Thus, the spring of 1971 deadline to get the rolling stock in. A steam engine, caboose and several cars, last used as hospital cars, were moved up the canyon to Heber some time ago.

Diamond Jubilee Day Excursion Altered As Ol' 618 Skids Off Rail

Provo Herald 10-Jan-1971

By CONNIE HANSEN

HEBER CITY — The Wasatch Mountain Railway's Engine 618 derailed for the second time this week Saturday, forcing it to miss its inaugural run as part of the Utah Diamond Jubilee Days.

Gov. Calvin L. Rampton and members of the state legislature had planned to ride the train from near Sundance Ski Resort to Wasatch State Park near Heber City.

While the train was coming from Heber City Saturday at 3 a.m. it hit a sheet of ice just below Deer Creek Dam and the front wheels of the engine jumped the track. The train was pulling only a tender car at the time of the derailment. The engine and its tender car remained upright and there were no injuries.

Plans Changed

The legislators were forced to take buses and cars to Wasatch State Park from Sundance Ski Resort.

Even after the morning run was cancelled, workmen hoped to have the train back on the tracks for an afternoon run with the legislators after lunch, but this attempt also fell short.

Attempts to make the run during Diamond Jubilee Days have been plagued during the

last few weeks by cold weather and sub-zero temperatures.

Tourist Attraction

Lowell Ashton, a prominent Heber businessman, is president of the company which hopes to run the train as a tourist attraction down Provo Canyon. No extended agreement has been reached between the Utah State Road Commission and the group for the trackage, which is owned by the Road Commission.

Road Commission officials have announced that the train sponsors have until April of 1972 to show that they have a workable plan which justifies leaving the aging track intact.

Problems have mounted throughout the week. On Tuesday, when the temperature plummeted to 26 degrees below zero in certain areas, the tender

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Diamond Jubilee Day Excursion Altered as Ol' 618 Skids Off Rail

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behind the engine froze in three inches of ice, which required several hours of work to free it. Two-hour shifts were put into effect, manned by Greg Drury, Chick Neilson, Gordon Wheeler and Ed McLaughlin. Members of the Promontory Railway Chapter also volunteered their services.

Valiant Effort

Living quarters were established in the caboose where a pot-bellied stove served as the only protection from the elements. Fires were built under the engine and were tended during the night.

Wednesday and Thursday brought continued trips up and down the tracks to keep the engine warm, and in all 20 tons of coal, brought from Emery County, were burned.

Late Thursday the engine was

to be backed down the tracks to allow the remaining cars to be lined up, but as it backed, the engine hit cement which had hardened on the tracks and it was derailed.

On Friday a small fire caused complications, but was soon put out and by 9:30 p.m. the train was lifted back onto the track. It started down the canyon, to the relief of the crews, but at about 3 a.m. Saturday, at Deer Creek Park, the engine hit a patch of ice and was derailed again.

Mr. McLaughlin, executive director of the Wasatch Mountain Railway, directed the activities of the train from Heber City.

Western Garfield Railroad and Kennecott Copper Corporation assisted in the operations by sending equipment, and fresh manpower was also volunteered.



COMING DOWN THIS GRADE, the Wasatch Mountain Railway's Engine 618 derailed below Deer Creek Dam about 3 a.m. Saturday

morning. Workmen tried frantically to get the engine back on the track and down to Bridal Veil Falls for an inaugural ride.



PUFFING STEAM in a vain attempt to get back on the track while being pulled from behind by a bulldozer, Engine 618 didn't make it on this try Saturday morning. The bulldozer pulled back and the engine tried to back up and angle its wheels onto the track.



WORKMEN PLACE ANGLE BARS at the wheels of Engine 618, trying to angle her back onto the track Saturday morning. At this point, the engine was about eight inches off the track. When eight inches was reached the workmen ran out of angle bars temporarily.

Heber Creeper Train

Fails on Initial Event

Sun. 10 Jan 1971 68

Special to The Tribune
HEBER CITY—The "Heber Creeper" tourist train's inaugural run up Provo Canyon was called off Saturday morning when the main participant — the train — failed to show.

The "Creeper," on its way to Bridal Veil Falls to pick up about 300 special guests on the run, was held up and derailed by heavy snow and ice which have plagued the area following storms and cold temperatures during the last several days.

Derailed Twice

The train was derailed twice during its ill-fated run, once Friday night in Heber City and once Saturday morning near Hooper. Crews worked several hours rerailling the "Creeper" Friday night, but when it crept off the tracks Saturday morning there wasn't enough time for rerailling before the inaugural run.

Following the 90-minute inaugural run to Heber City, the train was to have made free, roundtrip runs the rest

of the afternoon carrying the general public. But by the time it was back on the rails at 3:30 p.m., it was too late.

Free Rides Sunday

Lowe Ashton Jr., president of Wasatch Mountain Railway, said the "Creeper" will be making free, roundtrip runs between Heber City and Wallburg Sliding Sunday from noon to 6 p.m. Riders will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, he added.

The inaugural run was to have carried Gov. Calvin L. Rampton, a group of about 50 state legislators and invited guests to Heber City following a reception at Robert Redford's Sundance Resort marking Recreation and Tourism Day as part of the state's 75th anniversary celebration.

But when the train didn't show, the group went on into Heber City on buses for a meeting at Wasatch State Park. Following the meeting, the group finally got on the track when snowmobiles were provided for them to ride through the area.

This same Sunday afternoon between 1:00 PM & 5 PM This same "Failure Train" Hauled 4 loads of people from Heber City to Heber Valley's Wasatch State Park and 4 back as follows:

1 st load	272 patrons
2 nd load	210 "
3 rd "	255 "
4 th "	447 "
Grand Total	1184



The Salt Lake Tribune

Sunday Morning, January 10, 1971

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Provo Canyon Conflict Reflects Cross Purposes in Road Action

As resourceful as those opposing road improvements in Provo Canyon have been, they strike wide of the cornerstone. Construction will proceed as long as state officials are persuaded present and future vehicle traffic requires it. Arguing that other considerations are more important may win modifications, but it isn't likely to halt the work.

Objection to the proposed straightening and widening of U.S. 189 is based on concern for the canyon's acknowledged scenic splendor. Moreover, there is deep fear that the planned channel changes will further harm the Provo River and its fish habitat.

The Utah Highway Department is planning to widen the present two-lane canyon stretch, adding a third truck lane where necessary, making it possible to someday build a full four-lane road. Department engineers have repeatedly insisted they can design these improvements compatible with the canyon's landscape and without doing the river permanent damage. Organized opposition won't buy that.

In any case, the final decision is not apt to depend on who likes fish and rocky outcroppings the most, but rather on the need for safe and adequate road mileage east-west through the mountains with Provo at the transfer point. From all data — vehicle counts, accident rates, updated roadway standards and, above all, highway user demands — state highway authorities concluded the Provo Canyon job is due.

To sidetrack it will take a strategy that somehow overrides the highway officials' responsibility to provide improved roads that are justified by discernible traffic conditions.

Highway officials have recognized the newly framed environmental questions, perhaps belatedly, and groups such as those fighting the Provo Canyon project can claim credit for helping force the issue. But the new conservationists will also have to learn the highway builders' language if conflicts such as the one in Provo Canyon are to be reconciled in reasonable fashion.